

one of the greatest concentrations of wildlife in East Africa and full advantage is taken by the Cape Rook of this abundant source of suitable nesting material. The inside diameter of the nest-cup is about  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches and the depth about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

In all instances the well concealed nests were located at the terminal ends of the branches of fairly low and thickly foliated *Ficus* trees, and there was no attempt at colonial nesting. In one instance only were two nests found in the same tree. Three of the nests were found in the same trees as those recorded by Thomas and it appears possible that this species, at any rate in Ngorongoro, may use the same nest each year. I was Game Warden at Ngorongoro at the time Thomas made his observations and I would consider there has been an appreciable increase in this species over the past eight years, as has been recorded elsewhere in East Africa by Mackworth-Praed & Grant.

References:

- Mackworth-Praed, C. W. and Grant, G. H. B., 1957. *Birds of Eastern and North Eastern Africa*. Longmans Green and Co., London.  
 Thomas, D. K., 1960. Birds-Notes on Breeding in Tanganyika. *Tanganyika Notes and Records*. No. 55.

## Seafowl and land migrants observed on a voyage, London to Capetown, 26th April—12th May 1966

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**GENERAL.** The day to day details of this voyage—the only port of call was Las Palmas, Gran Canaria—are with the Royal Naval Bird Watching Society. At this season the main northerly movement of land birds was over and it was not anticipated that other than a few belated stragglers would be seen, possibly the Swallow, *Hirundo rustica* and the Kestrel, *Falco tinnunculus*, off the “bulge” of Africa.

Seafowl were scarce or absent throughout the voyage except for three days (2nd to 4th May) off the “bulge”. North of the Equator the petrels and shearwaters which breed on the Canary and Cape Verde Islands and in the British Isles (Manx Shearwater) had evidently not returned to their breeding grounds, and south of the Equator (and nearing Capetown) the hordes of other species of petrels and shearwaters which would be much in evidence some weeks later were conspicuously absent not having returned from their southern and Antarctic breeding grounds.

Small flocks of distant terns, seen off the “bulge” and the southern African coast, were too far off to identify. Seafowl were most plentiful in the vicinity of the best fishing grounds and most active in the late afternoon. Observations were rarely made between 1400 and 1700 hours.

**SHIP'S POSITION.** The most rewarding days for viewing seafowl were 2nd, 3rd and 4th May, off the “bulge”, north of the Equator, and 11th May, the day before dawn arrival at Capetown.

2nd May—at noon just south of the Tropic of Cancer, and at 1730 westerly from Cape Blanco.

3rd May—at 1240 passing Cape Verde and Dakar and from 1700—1830 westerly from Portuguese Guinea.

4th May—at noon due west of Freetown, Sierra Leone.

5th May—at noon 150 miles north of the Equator.

BLANK DAYS WITHOUT SEAFOWL. 28th April (Bay of Biscay), 30th April (westerly from Mogador), 5th May ( $2^{\circ} 42' N. : 10^{\circ} 36' W.$ ), 7th May ( $8^{\circ} 33' S. : 2^{\circ} 19' W.$ ) and 8th May ( $14^{\circ} 04' S. : 6^{\circ} 07' E.$ ); all are noon positions.

ALMOST BLANK DAYS. 29th April (1 Lesser Black-backed Gull), 1st May (1 Yellow-legged Herring Gull), 6th May (1 Sooty Tern) and 9th May, small distant flock White Terns at 1355 ( $19^{\circ} 26' S. : 6^{\circ} 07' E.$ ). So, out of 15 days for observing seafowl, five were blank and four almost blank, and omitting the 27th April (the English Channel and breeding resident gulls) and 10th May (only 1 Wandering Albatross and 1 Black-browed Albatross), there were only four days on which seafowl were either seen continuously or in quantity.

LAND MIGRANTS. As expected, off the "bulge", a Swallow was perched in a dark corner on board at dusk on 3rd May, and another on 5th May at 0920 was flying northerly close by the ship. On 3rd May a Kestrel was resting in the afternoon on the central superstructure.

The day before reaching Las Palmas a small passerine was seen on board most of the daylight hours, though I only saw it at about 1700 hours just before it departed northerly after having had some 8 to 10 hours rest.

But the most extraordinary assisted passage was afforded an African Laughing Dove, *Streptopelia senegalensis*, a bird with which I had been familiar in Africa for thirty years and which regularly nested in my Entebbe garden, in Uganda. At 0925 on 28th April, when we were still in the Bay of Biscay, it was observed closely for a brief period flying about the aft well-deck, and presumably the same bird, was seen again at 1230 on 30th April, when the ship's position was westerly from Mogador. It was again flying about the aft well-deck and for a time was settled enabling once more close observation; it soon disappeared and presumably returned to Africa. Recent storms of extreme violence along the west coasts of Morocco, Portugal and Spain could account for this dove's occurrence so far away from its normal habitat.

SEAFOWL. Seafowl are separated into:— (1) Resident species; (2) Migrants, *to* their northern breeding grounds; and (3) Migrants, *from* their southern breeding grounds. They are each listed in the order in which they were first seen.

(1) *Resident species*. HERRING GULL, *Larus argentatus*. On 27th April, plenty of adults following the ship down the English Channel, from near Dover to well past the Isle of Wight.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL, *Larus fuscus*. On 27th April, half-a-dozen following at 1600 hours onwards, this number by dusk had increased to about three dozen, all adult. On 29th April, at 1820, when westerly from Cape St. Vincent (though not in sight) one adult followed briefly and then flew northerly. I suspect it was "ship-hopping", as there was much shipping in the vicinity.

YELLOW-LEGGED HERRING GULL, *Larus cachinnans atlantis*. A solitary example only seen in Las Palmas harbour, between dawn and 1400 hours.